

## Food Stamp Basics

When you, another adult member of your household or someone you authorize applies for Food Stamp benefits, information about your household members, income, and expenses is reported to the Family Support Division (FSD). This information is used to determine if you are eligible for Food Stamps and the amount of benefits you may receive.

An FSD team member will interview you or your representative to obtain information, clarify your situation, and inform you of your rights.

If you are found eligible for Food Stamps, you will be certified for 12 or 24 months, this is called the *certification period*. The length of your *certification period* is determined by your household. Households with elderly or disabled adults and no earned income are certified for 24 months, all other households are certified for 12 months.

During the *certification period*, you must report certain household changes. These changes and information that becomes known to FSD may change the amount of Food Stamp benefits you will receive.

This is called ***Simplified Reporting***. Simplified Reporting is a policy that reduces the number of changes you need to report and the number of changes the FSD will make on your case.

Simplified reporting is only for the Food Stamp Program. If you are receiving other kinds of assistance such as Temporary Assistance, Child Care, or MO HealthNet, you must report any changes in your household's circumstances.

Each program has different guidelines for reporting changes. Contact the FSD Information Center toll free at 1-855-FSD-INFO (1-855-373-4636) for more information.

## Mid-Certification Review

During your *certification period* you will receive a mid-certification review form. The review form is for a 6 or 12 month review depending on the length of your *certification period*.

The information on the form is the current information we have on record for your household. Use the form to update your case with all changes in your household.

You must answer all the questions, report any changes, sign the form, and return the form to the FSD office.

If you do not complete and return the form, we may close your case.

## Are there other changes and other times I need to report?

Yes, you must report if your household's gross income exceeds the maximum allowed for your household size.

This amount is listed on your "Claimant Action Notice" when you are approved.

## How do I report other changes?

All approved households receive a "Change Report" form. The "Change Report" form shows you what to report and the income maximum for your household size.

You can also report changes online by going to the State of Missouri Social Services website at <http://www.dss.mo.gov/fsd> or by calling the FSD Information Center toll free at 1-855-FSD-INFO (1-855-373-4636).

## Is there a time period for reporting changes?

Yes, changes must be reported no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month after the month of the change.

## What if my income decreases or my expenses increase, do I report those changes?

Households are not required to report these changes; however an increase in expenses or a decrease in income may result in you being eligible for more Food Stamp benefits.

Verification of these changes may be needed. If you do not have this verification or are having difficulty getting it, contact the FSD and our team members will assist you in getting the information.

## **What happens if I report something that I don't have to report?**

When you report a change or we learn of new information, it is entered into your case record.

If the change results in an increase in benefits we will increase your Food Stamp benefits and send you a notice showing the new amount.

If the change results in a decrease in benefits or causes your case to close, we will send you a notice explaining this.

If you disagree with any decision we make concerning your Food Stamp benefits, you may request a fair hearing.

## **What happens if I don't report something that I should have?**

If we discover that you did not report something that was required to be reported, the information will be added to your case record. If you received more benefits than you were entitled to a claim will be done so you can repay the overpaid benefits.

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Any person who believes s/he may have been the object of such discrimination may file a written complaint with the County office or the Family Support Division, giving the specific details as to how and when the discrimination took place. Send complaints to the Office of Civil Rights, P. O. Box 1527, Jefferson City, Missouri 65102.

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To file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.

You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested on the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us at: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

Individual who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, contact the USDA Snap Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish or call the State Information/Hotline Numbers (click the link for a listing of hotline numbers by State); found online at [http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact\\_info/hotlines.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact_info/hotlines.htm).

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# **SIMPLIFIED REPORTING FOR THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM**

